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Chief Executive Officer

County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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June 23, 2009

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To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
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From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. T. Fujioka", is written over the printed name and title.

DRAFT CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES TO ESTABLISH FORMAL FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGN JURISDICTIONS

The purpose of this memorandum is to present draft criteria and procedures for establishing formal friendship relationships with foreign jurisdictions. We have also drafted guidelines for the governance and conduct of the friendship committees that promote and maintain these commitments. The Office of Protocol worked closely with the County Counsel's office in the development of these draft criteria and procedures. Your offices will be contacted by the Protocol staff to obtain your input prior to finalization.

Background

In 1988, in response to the Board's direction, the Chief Administrative Officer at that time made recommendations on the feasibility of establishing formal friendship relationships with similar jurisdictions in other countries. An outline of the action plan, submitted by the former Chief Administrative Officer, is contained in Attachment I.

Since then, the Board of Supervisors has signed formal friendship agreements with three entities: Taipei County in 1996; City of Huhhot in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in 2000; and Rome Province in 2006. Also, on September 5, 2006, the Board approved the formation of a community Friendship Committee to investigate a formal friendship relationship with Dubai Municipality in the United Arab Emirates. The committee became inactive in 2007 when the chair of the committee moved out of this

Each Supervisor
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country. In 2007 there were attempts to form a committee to look into the possibility of a formal friendship relationship with the City of Nanning in the People's Republic of China. The committee membership has not yet been finalized.

In 2008 and 2009, the Office of Protocol received inquiries from Supervisors who had been approached by constituents, and direct inquiries from the public on the policies and procedures for forming formal friendship relationships. Therefore, we believe it is an appropriate time to review and update the existing County criteria and procedures for the establishment of these formal relationships and for the effective governance and conduct of the committees that promote and maintain these commitments.

The Office of Protocol has also reviewed the benefit of joining Sister Cities International, and the benefits do not outweigh the cost, which is \$1,965 annually, and the organization's restrictions on the relationships we would establish. The Protocol staff also surveyed the structures of other formal friendship programs, primarily of cities, and this survey is represented in Attachment II. The survey revealed a major finding that 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporations were effectively used to provide structures to support funding for program activities of the formal foreign friendship relationships.

In this spirit, we are offering for your review these draft criteria and procedures for establishing formal friendship relationships with foreign jurisdictions, including County friendship committees which will provide community involvement and financial resources in support of the relationship. These are contained in Attachment III.

The Protocol staff will be contacting your Protocol Deputies to begin discussing the draft criteria and procedures and securing the input of your offices. In the meanwhile, if you would like additional information or have questions, please contact Lourdes Saab at (213) 974-1307.

Thank you for your cooperation and efforts.

WTF:SH
GK:LS:er

Attachments



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

713 HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

October 3, 1988

To: Each Supervisor

From: Richard B. Dixon *Richard*
Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: COUNTY RELATIONSHIPS WITH SIMILAR FOREIGN
JURISDICTIONS, "SISTER COUNTIES"

This is in response to your Board's order to my office to investigate and make a recommendation on the feasibility of establishing sister county relationships with similar jurisdictions in other countries.

Summary

It is feasible to establish sister county relationships or friendship agreements (as a step preliminary to a formal sister county contract) with counterpart jurisdictions in other countries if certain criteria are met and the preliminary steps described below are taken.

Criteria - Our research and the experience of other counties and cities indicates that a sister affiliation will not succeed unless:

1. The foreign jurisdiction has common interests and similar characteristics to those of Los Angeles County. (Details are in Attachment I).
2. There is a strong interest in the proposed foreign jurisdiction in our community among the business sector, expatriates from that country, and general community members.

In the case of Los Angeles County, we believe it is also important for there to be a link and involvement with the County Economic Development Corporation to assist in getting business sector involved and active. The potential for increased business and trade is important.

3. Considerable volunteer manpower from the named groups is available to keep a sister county or friendship agreement alive by planning and implementing exchange activities.

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4. Private funding is available (or raised by the volunteer committee).

Recommended Plan of Action

1. I recommend that your Board get involved with another jurisdiction only if there is broadbased community interest and demonstrated active support for the jurisdiction being considered and if Los Angeles County has characteristics and interests in common with the jurisdiction.

2. I recommend that the Board enter into informal friendship agreements with interested jurisdictions as a preliminary step to entering into the more serious, formal contractual obligation that constitutes an official sister county agreement.

An informal friendship agreement or statement will give both jurisdictions time to determine if there are common interests and similarities that could eventually lead to a successful "sister" affiliation. A sister county affiliation should be carefully planned and developed with strong community support and commitment. It cannot be accomplished by a simple Board order or proclamation. Continuing activity is required; hence, the critical nature of community support and the availability of volunteers to keep the relationship going.

3. I recommend that the coordination of county activities for sister county or friendship agreements be assigned to the Office of Protocol. From a recent conference in New York, we learned that the Sister Cities Programs most frequently fall within the jurisdiction of the Office of Protocol.
4. There are jurisdictions in two countries which have expressed an interest in a link with Los Angeles County. Appropriate motions will be introduced instructing the Chief of Protocol to investigate and respond to the initial overtures that have been made to us by these two countries.

Attachment II contains information about the genesis and purpose of the sister cities program and more detail about how sister city/county affiliations actually work.

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Attachments

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF A SISTER CITY

The following is a composite of different factors that might be taken into consideration when selecting a sister city. Keep in mind that this is a shopping list of characteristics; your city should select and prioritize those factors which are most important to your city and its sister cities program.

Overall Factors to Take into Consideration

1. Genuine interest on both sides.
2. Long-term commitment for the relationship.
3. Adequate financial support for exchanges and maintenance of the sister cities relationship.
4. Realistic assessment of what makes a successful sister cities relationship.
5. Look for best results which will capitalize on existing strengths.
6. Separate emotional and political issues from political, economic, commercial and cultural realities.
7. A desire to learn from and share with a sister city can, in many cases, balance the lack of any similar characteristics with a potential sister city.

General

1. Population
2. Similar geographic location (mountains, lake, port)
3. Comparison of key industries
4. Local ethnic population
5. Existing linkages (university, businesses)
6. Does the city have other sister cities? Are they successful?
7. Role of the city and sister cities committee in the relationship.

Cultural/Civic/Educational

Presence of the following:

1. Museums
2. Theatres
3. Symphony/Orchestra
4. Libraries
5. Variety of civic organizations (Rotary Club, Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Boy/Girl Scouts, Women's Clubs)
6. Newspapers/Television
7. Sports teams, both amateur and professional
8. Hospitals
9. Schools (primary and secondary)
10. Colleges/Universities

(over)

Economic

1. Similar economic conditions
2. Level of government bureaucracy
3. Language/cultural patterns not creating barriers
4. Market analysis of industries
5. Investment climate/present investment levels
6. Branches of banks, factories, airlines present locally
7. Number of foreign residents locally

Commercial

1. Liberal/restrictive trade climate
2. If a port city -- port connections
3. Invisible trade -- education, high-tech, service exports
4. Trade exchange potential
5. Active Chamber of Commerce in both cities
6. Airlinks
7. Diplomatic presence
8. Honorary consuls
9. Number of tourists
10. Presence of foreign businesses/factories locally
11. Local businesses engaged in international activity

Political

1. Geographic location
2. History of diplomatic relations
3. Present degree of cooperation between U.S. and foreign country in political, economic, commercial and cultural fields.

SISTER CITY AND SISTER COUNTY RELATIONSHIPS

Background

The Sister City program as a national concept was started in 1956 as the People-to-People Program by President Dwight David Eisenhower. He believed that establishing people-to-people contacts around the world was a key to future world peace. Today through the Sister Cities International (SCI) program over 785 U.S. cities and 47 of the 50 states (including California) have sister city/state relationships with over 1200 communities in 87 other nations.

Sister county relationships are not as common as sister cities and states. The Sister City International headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia is working with several counties which are exploring the establishment of relationships with counterpart jurisdictions in other countries. In California, we know that the counties of Santa Barbara, Santa Clara and San Diego have already established sister county relationships. We understand that several other California counties are in the exploratory phase like we are.

Purpose

The purpose of a "sister" relationship between cities, states and counties is to further global understanding through people-to-people, community-to-community contacts on a continuing long-term basis. A sister city/county program is composed of a variety of projects. Examples are exchanges of visitors, officials, prominent citizens; organized tours; club affiliations; letter writing; school affiliations; technical and professional exchanges; art and cultural exchanges, etc.

Trade and business contacts and networking are becoming increasingly common and important, if not primary, of sister city/county relationships.

Key Factors About Sister City/County Programs

1. Sister city/county affiliations usually originate from either the local community or a foreign jurisdiction which approach the local governing body with a proposal to establish a "sister" program.
2. Choice of jurisdiction to affiliate with must be made carefully and based on similarities and a common ground in order to succeed.

Key Factors About Sister City/County Programs (continued)

3. Broad-based volunteer support from the community is essential in order for a program to become established, remain active and succeed.
4. Sister city/county affiliations are serious, formal commitments. A local volunteer committee or commission must be formed and Sister Cities International recommends obtaining status as a private, non-profit organization under 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service to ensure program continuity and to enhance fundraising capabilities.
5. Local government involvement typically consists of approving the formal relationships, ceremonial functions, travel to the other jurisdiction (private expense) and some in-kind support of the committee.
6. In the U.S., Sister City/County Committees and their activities are privately funded by charging the members dues and through fundraising activities. Members pay their own travel expenses in most all instances. The committee pays any costs associated with hosting visiting foreign delegations.
7. Foreign jurisdictions are more likely to fund support for the "sister" relationship than are U.S. local governments. Foreign public funding may cover the cost of staff to administer the program and travel to the U.S. and the cost of entertaining U.S. visitors to their city/county.
8. Sister city/county programs are usually managed, staffed and sustained by volunteers. The City of Los Angeles has 15 sister cities and their program is staffed by volunteers. The City provides in-kind support but has no paid staff assigned to the program. Some U.S. jurisdictions do allocate paid staff to their program.
9. Membership in Sister Cities International would cost Los Angeles County \$925 annually. This would be a County expense. Membership entitles an entity to a wide range of services including assistance in setting up a local program and help in matching with an appropriate jurisdiction if desired. Some counties have established sister county relationships without going through or joining SCI.

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SURVEY OF SISTER CITY PROGRAMS

The Office of Protocol conducted a survey of administrators of Sister City programs in six major cities located in California, Texas, the District of Columbia and New York. One of the major findings revealed in the survey is that 501(c)(3) non-profit corporations were effectively used for fund-raising purposes and provided the corporate structure to support the effective use of funds and program activities. Further, the survey demonstrated that the long time benefits of the 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation outweighed the complexity of forming the entities. The only city surveyed that does not utilize 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporations has cut back on activities because of fundraising difficulties, and is not pursuing expansion of its Sister City program.

City of Los Angeles

Los Angeles has 25 Sister Cities, and each is operated by a citizens' committee. About one-third of the committees are associated with 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporations. About two-thirds of the Sister City committees are dormant with no active members. The committees that are not affiliated with a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporations struggle to raise funds. The umbrella organization, Sister Cities of Los Angeles, Inc., is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation which was created in 1992 to provide support for the Sister City programs. It is staffed by a volunteer treasurer and assisted by a City Council staff member. A representative of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) office indicates that it is beneficial to have a structure to carefully consider and process the many proposals put forth to determine the motivations of the person or business interest and to insure civic benefit. The CLA representative has also indicated that it is a benefit to have the requirement that any future Sister City committee become a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation to support the activities of the Committee and the foreign relationship.

City of San Francisco

San Francisco has 15 Sister Cities, administered by the Mayor's Office of International Trade and Commerce. There is no umbrella organization. About 25 years ago, when U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein was Mayor of San Francisco, she reorganized the Sister City Administration, requiring that all future Sister City committees establish 501(c)(3) non-profit corporations. This was intended to facilitate fundraising and financial reporting. At this time 12 or 13 of the Sister City committees are supported by 501(c)(3) non-profit corporations. Sister City Committee chairs are appointed by the Mayor, but are basically non-political. This Sister City program is open to expansion.

City of San Diego

San Diego has 15 Sister Cities. Each has a Sister City committee which belongs to the umbrella 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, the San Diego Sister Cities Association. The Association is a member of Sister Cities International, and the City of San Diego provides office space for the organization. A number of the Sister City committees have formed their own 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporations. This Sister City program is open to expansion.

City of Houston, Texas

Houston has 17 Sister Cities. There is an umbrella organization, Sister Cities of Houston, Inc., made up of Sister City committee chairs or their appointed representatives, and up to five at large members. The umbrella organization is part of the Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau and has applied for 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation status. Since 1992 every Sister City committee is a separate 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. The city liaison with the Sister Cities committees is provided by the Houston City Council's International Liaison and Protocol Committee. The entire Sister City program is active in Sister Cities International, and they also participate in the Houston Concert series and the Houston International Festival. This Sister City program is open to expansion.

Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. has 11 Sister Cities. Each is run by a separate Sister City steering committee, and each steering committee is chaired by the Secretary of the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia has a unique situation that, according to an interpretation of local government ethics rule by the Special Counsel in the District Attorney General's Office, does not allow the outsourcing of any functions of government to an outside group and that specifically does not allow for the formation of any 501(c)(3) non-profit corporations headed by a government official or employee. There is a provision that allows for the raising of private funds for official events, although it has been described as cumbersome to use. As a result, the office of the Secretary of the District of Columbia reports that the groups avoid fundraising, and most Sister City activities become government-to-government events that rely on setting up meetings and presenting minor official gifts. Large events are limited to approximately one a year, hosted by a private organization. The Secretary's office also reports that Washington, D.C. has stopped trying to add more Sister Cities because of its lack of resources.

New York City

New York City has 10 Sister Cities and 20 other bilateral relationships with foreign cities. All 30 relationships are directly administered by New York City Global Partners (NYCGP), a 501(c)(3) organization that was restructured from the former Sister City Program of the City of New York, Inc., and renamed. NYCGP is in the

Mayor's Office -- the Office of the New York City Commission for the United Nations, Consular Corps and Protocol (UNCCP). NYCGP has the mission to expand the city's interaction with world cities while maintaining its 10 historic Sister City relationships. It is run by an 18-member Board of Directors, some of whom are appointed by the Mayor, or who are on the board because of holding a city office or position. For example, the UNCCP Commissioner is Treasurer of the Board. The NYCGP Director and a Program Manager are members of the Mayor's staff. Every year NYCGP convenes at least one international summit of cities to discuss common challenges, share best practices and chart future common action. The New York City Global Partners Summit on "Job Creation and Workforce Development" is scheduled for June 24-26, 2009, with 28 cities listed to participate, at least three of them from the United States. NYCGP will continue to expand the number of bilateral relationships with foreign cities, and will no longer form traditional Sister City relationships.

**FORMAL FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIPS
WITH FOREIGN JURISDICTIONS**

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

This document provides the criteria and procedures for establishing formal friendship relations with Foreign Jurisdictions.

I. Inquiry from a County Resident to form a Friendship Relationship with a Foreign Jurisdiction

A constituent may inquire about the feasibility of forming a formal friendship relationship between the County of Los Angeles and the Foreign Jurisdiction. Inquiries may be made directly to the Supervisor in whose district the constituent resides, or to the Office of Protocol.

If the Supervisor agrees to explore the viability of establishing a formal relationship with the Foreign Jurisdiction, the Office of Protocol will ask the constituent to submit a Preliminary Statement of Interest.

II. Preliminary Statement of Interest

A. A Preliminary Statement of Interest is submitted to begin the process of examining the viability of establishing a formal relationship with the Foreign Jurisdiction. The Preliminary Statement of Interest should include the following elements:

1. Identification of areas of mutual benefit and similarities with the Foreign Jurisdiction including consideration of the following:

- Geography;
- Infrastructure, e.g. harbor, international airport;
- Economic interests, e.g. business, trade and tourism opportunities;
- Cultural amenities, e.g. museums, theatres, libraries;
- Educational institutions and interests;
- Science & technology;
- Governance; and
- Population size and demographics.

2. A review and identification of community resources to support the establishment of an effective Friendship Committee which would provide support for the relationship. Most Foreign Jurisdictions support their Sister Cities and other formal relationships with government funds and personnel.

In the United States these relationships are people-to-people and supported by volunteers. Therefore, for a reciprocal relationship to succeed, it should include the following elements:

- a. Strong interest in the proposed Foreign Jurisdiction among a sufficient number of residents in the County, including people in the business, cultural and educational sectors, expatriates from that country, and general community members, so that the potential formal friendship relationship may be effectively supported through the planning and implementation of meaningful exchange activities;
 - b. Identification of potential volunteers committed to supporting a Friendship Committee to begin program planning; and
 - c. Availability of resources so that adequate funds can be raised by the Friendship Committee to carry out appropriate travel, hosting activities, and program support; and capability of the originator to form a self sustaining committee either by establishing a separate 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation or demonstrating an affiliation with an existing 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation.
3. Representation in Los Angeles County by a Consulate of the Foreign Jurisdiction is preferable. The Office of Protocol, as a courtesy, notifies the local Consulate or the Embassy of the country in which the Foreign Jurisdiction is located about the interest in establishing a formal friendship relationship.
- B. The Office of Protocol reviews the Preliminary Statement of Interest to determine the potential viability of the proposed relationship.
- C. If the review is negative, the Office of Protocol reports its findings to the Supervisor and to the constituent. If there is no interest by the Supervisor to sponsor the relationship, the process comes to an end. The County reserves the right to refuse any Preliminary Statement of Interest or proposal without comment.
- D. If the review is positive, the Office of Protocol reports its findings to the Supervisor and asks if he or she is willing to sponsor a motion authorizing the process of exploring the formal friendship relationship.

III. Board Action to Explore the Feasibility of a Formal Friendship Relationship

- A. If there is interest by the Supervisor to explore the viability of a formal friendship relationship with the Foreign Jurisdiction, then the Office of Protocol staff will assist the Supervisor in preparing a motion for Board consideration and approval.

B. The Board motion would:

1. Authorize the exploration of the feasibility of establishing a formal friendship relationship with the Foreign Jurisdiction, enables the Friendship Committee Chair to organize the Friendship Committee and names the Friendship Committee Chair. The Friendship Committee Chair cannot be a County employee, and does not have the status of a County Commissioner. They have an informal, but important relationship with the County.
2. Assign a staff member from the Office of Protocol to be the County liaison to the informal Friendship Committee.
3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to prepare and execute an MOU (as described more fully in Section V) with the Friendship Committee.

C. If there is no interest by the Supervisor to sponsor the relationship, the process comes to an end.

IV. Informal Friendship Committee Formation and Exploration Activities

Following Board approval to explore the feasibility of establishing a formal friendship relationship with the Foreign Jurisdiction, the following steps are undertaken.

- A. The informal Friendship Committee Chair establishes a self-sustaining committee. The informal Friendship Committee is solely responsible for supporting the work and funding its evaluation activities. However, the Committee shall consult with the Office of Protocol and the staff member as appropriate.
- B. The Friendship Committee, in consultation with the Office of Protocol, researches and establishes the appropriate contacts in the Foreign Jurisdiction and identifies possible programs, exchanges and activities of mutual benefit to Los Angeles County and the Foreign Jurisdiction.
- C. The Friendship Committee will decide how to support the ongoing activities between the County and the Foreign Jurisdiction. This includes consideration of creating a new or working with an existing 501 (c)(3) non profit corporation.
- D. At the conclusion of the exploration activities, the informal Friendship Committee Chairperson will make a recommendation to the Office of Protocol as to whether the County should pursue a formal friendship agreement with the Foreign Jurisdiction.

V. The Memorandum of Understanding

Once the steps in Section IV have been achieved, the Office of Protocol will prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and the Friendship Committee.

A. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an agreement between the Friendship Committee and the County. The MOU will include elements to ensure the viability and self governance of the Friendship Committee and its relationship to the County.

B. The MOU will include the following activities as responsibilities of the Friendship Committee:

1. Create, or at a minimum, file appropriate documents to establish a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation or demonstrate affiliation with an existing 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation;
2. Assure that funds will only be raised for activities and events pursuant to the conduct of business, cultural, economic, educational, and other non-political relations with their Foreign Jurisdiction;
3. Assure that donations or expenditures of Committee funds will not be to or from any domestic or foreign political interests or activities whatsoever; and
4. Create its own bank account, and assure responsibility for all tax accounting and other requirements of being a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. This step is necessary before any Friendship Agreement (non binding) is finalized, and will help ensure program continuity, enhance fundraising capabilities, and add the discipline of organizational structure to the undertaking. The MOU will clearly provide that the 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation is to be a separate legal entity completely independent of the County, and that the County is not in any way liable for any acts or omissions of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

Because obtaining status as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation may take months, the completion of this process may take place after the Board approves the formal Friendship Agreement with the Foreign Jurisdiction. However, the informal Friendship Committee must file for 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation status and demonstrate the likelihood of receiving approval from the federal government.

5. Consult with the Office of Protocol in regards to the use of business cards and letterhead.

VI. Board Action Adopting the Final Formal Friendship Agreement (non binding)

The steps leading to the formal Board action on the final Formal Friendship Agreement are as follows:

- A. After the MOU between the County and the Committee has been executed by both parties and appropriate and satisfactory exchanges have been concluded between the County and the Foreign Jurisdiction, the Office of Protocol notifies the sponsoring Supervisor (who brought the original enabling motion), of its recommendation that a final Friendship Agreement (non binding) be finalized.
- B. The motion for the creation of a formal Friendship Agreement (non binding) between the County, the Foreign Jurisdiction, and the Friendship Committee is drafted by the Office of Protocol with the assistance of the County Counsel's office in consultation with the Friendship Committee and the Foreign Jurisdiction. The Friendship Agreement will be written in English and in the language of the Foreign Jurisdiction.
- C. The Supervisor introduces the motion for the formal Friendship Agreement (non binding) to the Board of Supervisors. Three (3) votes are required to pass the motion.

VII. Formal Friendship Committee

The formal Friendship Committee is established with Board approval of the formal Friendship relationship with the Foreign Jurisdiction. The following are some responsibilities and guidelines:

- A. Develop programs of mutual benefit to the County of Los Angeles and the Foreign Jurisdiction, and organize exchanges. When appropriate, the Office of Protocol will support special events involving the Board of Supervisors, including arranging for the formal signing of the friendship agreement by the head of each party. The Friendship Agreement will be written in English and in the language of the Foreign Jurisdiction.
- B. Operate consistent with the provisions established order of the MOU.